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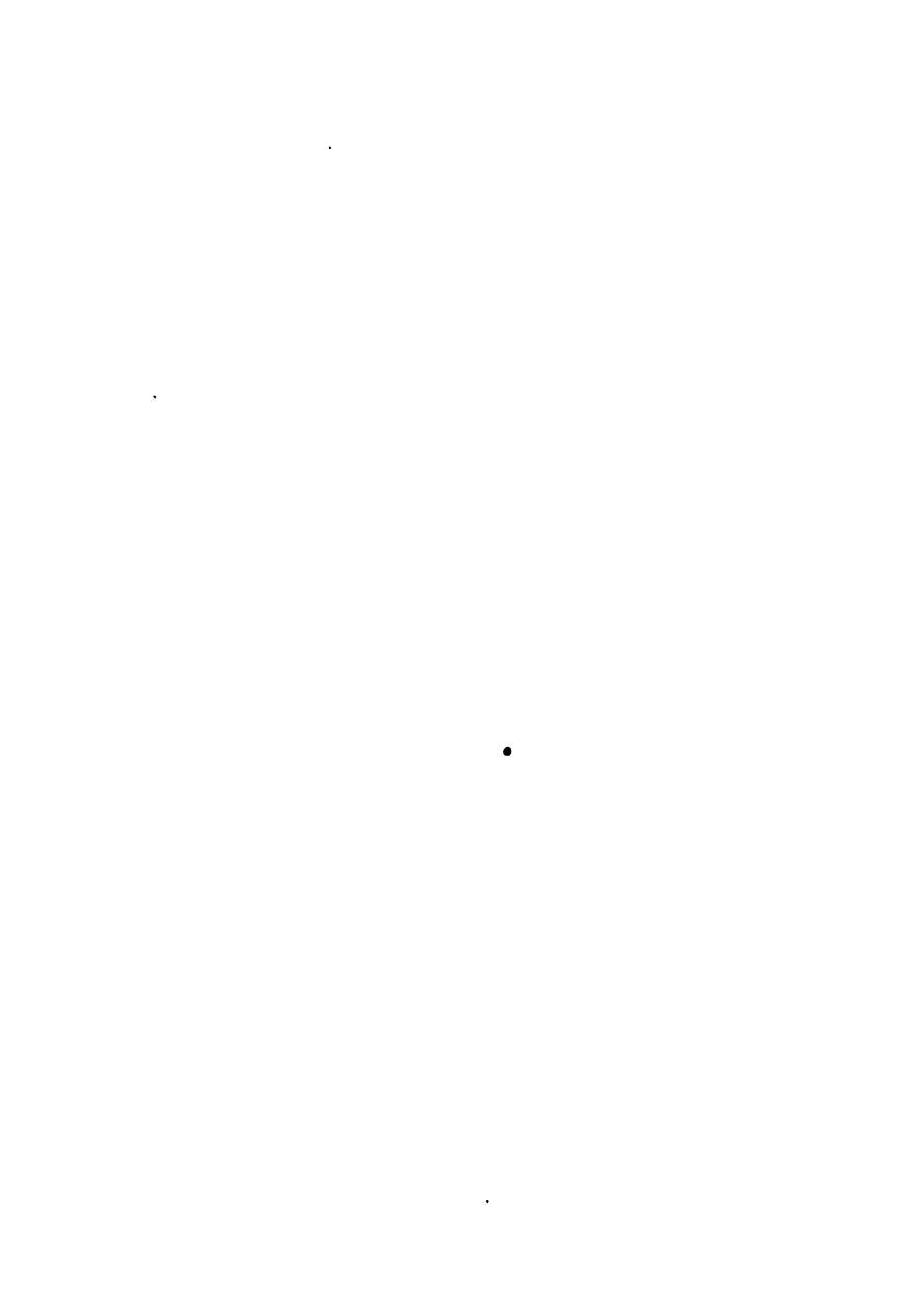
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FEUDAL TIMES;

OR,

THE COURT OF JAMES THE THIRD.

A Scottish Historical Play.

BY

AUTHOR OF "THE EARL OF GOWRIE," "THE KING
OF THE COMMONS," &c.

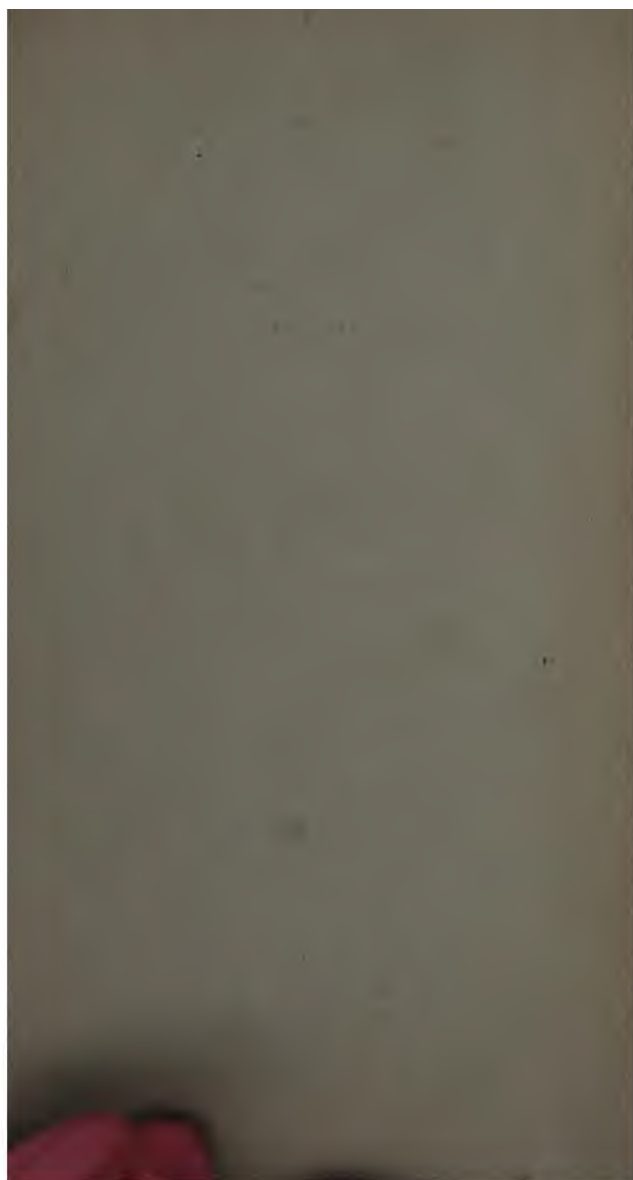
First represented at the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, 1855.

LONDON:

CHAPMAN AND HALL, 186 STRAND.

MDCCLXVII.

Price Eighteenpence.





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White, James

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FROM
THE BEQUEST OF
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LONDON :
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Marg. Ha, they are gone! on, on they flash like light;

A shock!

James. What, then? Quick, quick!

Marg. A saddle's void;

The horse flies loose—

James. Which horse?

Marg. It is the black!

James. Thank Heaven for that! 'tis Angus is o'er-thrown.

Marg. Both steeds are loose.

James. What say you?

Marg. Sword to sword

They fight—'tis nobly struck! Oh, would to God

I were a knight! Again—he's down! he's down!

James. Who's down?

Marg. Lord Angus; o'er him like a king

Stands Mar.

James. He's safe! he's safe! Cochrane is safe!

Marg. He stoops, and raises Angus; he takes off
His helm; he lifts him. Now, by Heaven above,
A nobler man than that breathes not on earth!
He leads him to the tent.

James. Hear you the shouting?

They cannot hide their joy that he is safe.

See you nought else?

Marg. The crowd begins to part.

James. Come, then, we'll meet him. But I'll chide
him, too:

He must be mad to risk so rich a life

Against a man like that. Think you not so?

Marg. I know not, sir; 'twas noble, 'twas—my head
Feels giddy. Have I spoken against that man?

Hold me excused from going with your grace.

James. Haste, haste; I long to press him to my
heart!

[*Exeunt.*]

FEUDAL TIMES,

OR,

THE COURT OF JAMES THE THIRD.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*In front of Holyrood.*

Enter LENNOX and GAIRLIES.

Len. WHAT should we fear?

Gair. Loud talking, my Lord Lennox—
That's what we should have fear of.

Len. Not a whit.
Here's a poor king, led like a managed horse
By Cochrane. What is Cochrane?

Gair. He is a man,
A bold and wise one.

Len. A mechanical!
A fellow that plans houses, that builds bridges,
That levels roads, that rear'd the battlements
On this old Holyrood.

Gair. [*pointing up*]. That built, no less,
Yon donjon.

Len. Well, he shall not rule us long;
He's been our master since our noble prince
Bold Mar died SUDDENLY. And Albany,
Our other prince, is banished. Come, Lord Gairlies,
'Tis pitiful to yield to the base yoke
Of such a one as Cochrane. We must wake

Between the Esk and Nith, unless his name
Be Douglas.

Bish. But the thing is fixed, I tell you,
And Cochrane will be leader. We must strike,
Or yield at once.

Ang. I never could speak the word—
That “yield.”

Bish. If once he face the enemy,
And wins a stricken field, farewell, my lords,
To power and state for *you*; an iron hand
Will hold the sceptre, and your day is done;
You will be meek, submissive chamberlains,
Mild grooms of the stole, and pithless silver sticks;
Gilt pageants of a court,—but the true power
Will be with James. The people love this man.

1st Lord. But he shall never win a stricken field.

Len. He cannot fight the English by himself;
Now, if we were to run?—I’d do it myself
Willingly—if we all should run and leave him?—
Eh!—I but hint it.

2d Lord. Better let him try
The sharpness of a dagger.

Gray. Gentle lords,
I heard my nurse tell an old history,
How that the mice took counsel, and resolved
To hang a bell about Grimalkin’s neck,
To warn them of her coming; till one mouse,
A very sensible animal, I think,
Puzzled them all, by asking which of them
Would risk itself within the monster’s claws
To tie the string.

Len. My lords, I’m not a mouse;
But if I were, and Cochrane were a tabby,
I would not face his claw for all the world!

Ang. Leave it to me, my lords, I’ll bell the cat.

[*Shouting outside.*]

Gair. Ha, shouts for Cochrane’s triumph! Come,
my lord,

He must not see you thus.

Ang. But he *shall* see me—
I have to thank him for his courtesy;

I would it were in fitter guise than words. [*Exeunt.*]

My lords. I never had a fame for jesting ;
If I had been so lucky, and could trip
A score or two of verses from the tongue,
It might have served me better. Listen here :
The king has made this Cochrane belted earl,
And called him Mar. Power never sank so low,
Nor pride climbed up so high ; the king and he
Are brothers, nay, he's something more than brother,
And leads him as he lists.

Len. Come king, come devil,
I'll bear't no longer.

Gair. Gentle lord, be still :
Draw back ; they're coming.

Ang. [*looking up the High Street*]. An' he had been
born

A noble, he'd ha' borne him nobly. Pity
Such a proud mien should own no redder blood
Than a base churl's ! He bears him like a man,
And has an eye that—Lennox, in your ear,
When will you have so proud a glance as that ?
[*The lords retire.*]

Enter KING JAMES and COCHRANE, and attendants.

James. I wish I were a prince of Italy,
To see new towers rise in the balmy air,
And hear soft music all the livelong day.
Ah ! Cochrane, what a happier lot than mine
Is wise Lorenzo's—the magnificent—
The star of Florence ! How I envy him !

Coch. He has great duties, and he does them greatly,
And so is happy.

James. Painters, sculptors, poets,
Are round him ever ; eyes where genius glows,
And lips where love is cradled.

Coch. No, not ever ;
These are for pleasure hours ; his working time
Has other objects—wrongs to remedy—
To vindicate the law, and cast his shield
Over the powerless,—and with armed hand
To daunt the oppressor. Think, sir, you're a King.

James. A king—a Scottish king. Oh, let us talk

Enter JAMES.

James. Walter! and safe! Oh, how you wronge
me, Walter!

Coch. [*kneels*]. My liege.

James. Up from your knee, t'my heart, t'my heart
And not a wound? How dare you, Lord of Mar,
Transgress our orders?—but you are not touched?—
We shall take measure for your punishment.
O Walter! had you fall'n, what could I do
With the cold scowling of our lords!

Coch. Your grace
Will pardon my ambition to cross swords
With such a knight as Angus.

James. Such a knight!
Why I could knight a thousand such a day,
And make them dukes and earls; but you, dear friend
So wise, so deep, so elevate of soul—
How dared you fight without our royal will?
We'll put you in close ward.—And you, rash man,
How dared you lift your sacrilegious hand
On a high nature like Lord Mar's—our friend?

Ang. My liege, I saw a glove, and took it up.

Coch. True: on my knee, I plead for Angus' par-
don;

I was in fault, hot, heedless, and provoked:—
I was the challenger.

James [*to Angus*]. If you had touched
One hair, I would have borrowed a lion's heart,
And torn you where you stand!—But it is past.
Match you with rufflers like yourself; I'll find
Some way shall tame you.—Come, my Lord of Mar.

Coch. Not till you've pardoned Angus.

James. Pardoned him
The man that tried to rob me of my guide,
My aid, my stay!

Coch. You pardon both or none.

James. Well, from our heart we pardon you, Lo
Angus,

And trust to have your aid in our good cause
Ere long.

Gair. Sit down, Lord Angus, you are faint.

Ang. No ! if the standing racked me with hot pains
For ever, as they do now, I would not shew
By look or sign that Douglas owned a pang.
Farewell, Sir King ; farewell, my Lord of Mar.
I own you for a knight expert in arms ;
But an' my horse had equalled your grey steed,
The issue might have changed.

Coch. You like the horse ?

Ang. No knight e'er crossed a nobler.

Coch. My brave horse,

My gallant grey ! I rode him in the field
At Reggio with the Southern chivalry,
When we o'erthrew the turban'd Saracen :—
A soul of fire, a heart of gentleness,
A courage like a king's—my stately barb !—
[*To an attendant.*

Carry Grey Julian to Lord Angus' stable.—

My lord, he'll bear you with a step more proud,

Since he supports a Douglas and brave man.

Farewell. [Exeunt JAMES and COCHRANE,

Ang. I cannot take his horse.

Gair. Why not ?

'Tis worth a thousand crowns.

Bish. Another bribe

To win you to his service.

Gair. Take the horse ;

He knows he has no right to such a steed.

Ang. I cannot tell—there's something strange in
this ;

There never was a king with such an air,

Or opener hand. I'll think upon it, come. [Exeunt.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Room in Holyrood.*

JAMES, COCHRANE, LORD DRUMMOND.

JAMES gloomy and depressed.

Coch. What said the learned bishop ? Droop not so.

James. He warned me of false friends; he said the
stars
Prophesied evil.

Coch. Has the earth no poison,
That he must wrong the heavens? The stars on high
Fulfil their courses,—clear, unfailing, calm—
Reckless of what we do on this poor globe;
And if they give a lesson, 'tis but this—
To walk in high serene tranquillity
On our appointed paths, as they on theirs.

James. False friends, he said. I have no friend but
you;

I told him so; and then he shook his head
And prayed. Ah, Walter, if the stars speak truth?

Coch. I've given orders to receive the stars,
And hostile planets, and opposed conjunctions,
In fitting guise: Caerlaverock is well stored;
The Borders guarded; a stout company
On Lauder Bridge. If you advance your banner,
I think the heavens will smile before a week,
And the lord bishop read their lessons better.

James. But will our liegemen follow?

Coch. Try them, sir!
Lead them! 'Tis a poor heart that will not follow
When 'tis well led.

James. What I? Is there no way
To close this feud? What is it Albany wants?
They tell me he but asks our love again;
Oh, if he ask but that—

Coch. Who tell you this?
You have not heard of Albany's truth from Angus?

James. No.

Coch. He's too brave for falsehood.
James. But he'll bear
Hatred for what has hapt.

Coch. A heart like his,
If 'tis the heart I think it, has no room
For thought so base: no, sir; our strife shall be
Which shall be foremost in our country's service;
We shall be foes no longer.

James. You are like
The sun, dear Walter, all compact of light,

And bright'ning what it looks on, till it shines
As with a separate fire. I like not Angus.

Coch. He's rough in speech, but true in heart and hand.

The lords await your grace.

James.

Come with me.

Coch.

Nay;

I'll follow in brief space. Shew them their King—
Bear you a royal front; tell them your sword
Shall shine the foremost, and your steed tread first
Upon an English corse.

James.

Bring the full guard—

I like it not; where are their lordships now?

Coch. There—in the park. Fear not for Angus' faith;
I'll answer for his zeal.

James.

Would it were past!

They're in the park you say?

[*Exit JAMES.*]

Drum.

I think his grace

Looks downcast, though so near a stirring day.

Coch. You have forgot, my lord, that a king's heart
Is not as ours. He has a father's grief,
Who sees his son in danger of his life:

His subjects are his children. Pray you, follow,

And give him comfort. [*Exit LORD DRUMMOND.*]

All are ranged in wrath,

And pour their hate on me. Oh, why for this

Left I the sunny land, the golden south,

The birth-place of high thoughts and noble men!

But James, the loving king, the trustful heart;

I will not leave his side, though at his side

I know the grave lies open. All against me!

Lennox, the Queen, and the pure noble heart

Of Margaret Randolph! If she knew my thought,

How for no pride, nor avarice, nor ambition,

I toiled and struggled!—when the strife is o'er

She'll know how she has wronged me. Is't, then, so?

Beats there no heart in all this troubled land

In unison with mine? Angus, brave Angus!

One effort more to win so stout an arm!

I'll see him; he is harsh, and cold, and proud;

But bears too high a name to stoop so low

As play the traitor to his trusting king.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE II.—*A Room in the Palace.*

MARGARET and LADY DRUMMOND.

Marg. Dear Drummond, are you sure the queen is changed,

And hates this man? Why does she hate him?

Lady D.

Why?

I marvel you should ask: a man like him!

His fathers have been vassals of the Comyns,

Or tenants of the abbey-lands of Perth,

Or something else, I can't remember what.

Marg. And therefore the queen hates him?

Lady D.

To be sure.

Marg. Oh!

Lady D. Don't you hate the man yourself?

Marg.

Who? I?

Of course, of course; but what has changed the queen?

She did not hate him; nay, she chided me

Because I spoke so harshly of Lord Mar:

I did speak harshly—harshly, very harshly.

Lady D. Oh, you were always such a merry girl;

When you but heard his name—and the poor king—

His puppet! his poor toy! 'twas pretty sport

To hear how you described them.

Marg.

Was it so?

Lady D. But you look serious now. Is it because

He took some vantage over poor old Angus?

Marg. Vantage! what vantage save what his bold heart

And his stout arm bestowed? What moves the queen
To hate that man?

Lady D.

She thinks he rules the king

Too much; that it were better to bring back

The Duke of Albany, the good king's brother.

Marg. The man that fawns on England? the base
man,

The traitorous, cruel, lurking, false-tongued man,

That trusts to foreign swords to force his way

Over Scotch corsers to the Scottish crown?

No! I say no! I tell you, I say no!

Lady D. Margaret, what ails you? why, your eye is on fire,

Your hand is shaking: what's the matter, girl?

Marg. Where's Angus? he is absent—ah! ask me not why my hand shakes; if it were motion'd above, It would not shake. Where is the Earl of Angus?

Lady D. I think he's in the park: the other lords Hold council.

Marg. Do they? They hold council: Now in the name of heaven and all the saints, What need of counsel now, when the foe stands In very act to spring on our poor land? Council! pah! there's no time for council now. I'll see the Earl of Angus.

Lady D. Wait awhile: I'll go with you: put on your hood and veil.

Marg. No! as I am!—Counsel! I scorn the word! Follow me, Drummond. If the queen takes part With Albany, and frowns upon Lord Mar—James is so easily led—I'll see Lord Angus. *[Exit.*

SCENE III.—*The Park.*

GAIRLIES, GRAY, LENNOX, BISHOP, LORDS.

Gair. This Cochrane has wrought marvels on the king.

Bish. I tell you, sirs, there's something more in this Than comes of mortal guiding. He has help From all the fiends.

Enter ANGUS from behind.

Ang. Then he has goodly friends: We'll try and get some devils of our own; He can't have got them all.

Bish. You'll find it true.

Ang. *[to the Lords].* What happened at your meeting?

Gair. Hang your sword On an old nail.

Gray. Take off your spurs, brave Angus.

Ang. Look you, my lords; I know not what you mean;

But if it be because my spear broke short
On Cochrane's breastplate, I will shew your lordships,
Which ever of you chooses to essay it,
That I've another spear of sharper point :
Who answers me ?

Bish. 'Tis not of that, brave Angus ;
'Tis that this Cochrane, by the secret aid
Of the foul fiend—

Ang. Psha ! Is it only that ?
What said the king ?

Gair. That we must all advance
To guard the Border against Albany.

Ang. I will not move an inch. What else, my lord ?

Gair. Cochrane has seized on every Border strength ;
Caerlaverock—Annan Tower—the Hermitage—

Ang. Ha !

Gair. And the fords of Esk, and Tweed, and Nith.

Ang. Now by my soul, he bears him like a man !

Pity he will not live to boast of it !

Gair. If you should fail, *our* daggers will make sure.

Ang. I shall not fail ;—[*to himself*] and yet he's of
stout heart ;

I wish he did not lie in Douglas' way.

Gray. Our swords will aid.

Bish. I put him in the ban
As a fiend's friend ; who slays him is a friend
To us and Rome.

Ang. Aid, aid,—I want no aid,
Nor ban, nor Rome. Listen, my good lord bishop ;
I know the sort of slaying pleases best
Our holy mother Church : a quiet stab
Where no one sees ; a sleeping draught too strong ;
An eyeless dungeon in some hidden tower :
I'll have no deed like this to please the Church.
This Cochrane is a Man, and as a man,
And by a man, he shall be slain. This arm
Shall do the deed. It is no fameless thing,
A brave man's doom. That man's a foe to me

That takes this from me. Be he priest or earl,
The man that slays Lord Mar, till I am by,
Dies by this hand.

As ANGUS is going out, enter COCHRANE, with Attendants and the Royal Banner.

Cock. The king departed!—Angus!

Gair. Here's Cochrane.

Cock. I would speak to you, my lord.

Ang. Were you a spy, my lord? for if you were,
And heard my words—

Cock. I heard you not.

Gair. [*to the Lords*]. Hush! hush!

Ang. I told your lordship when I saw you last,
We were not friends: I am not to be bought
Even by the worthless life you left to me.

Cock. Bought, my good lord? oh, 'twere of price-
less worth

The heart of a brave man in this our need.
I fain would buy you, but as noble hearts
Are bought—by noble trust.

Ang. Trust me no trust;
I know what place is mine, or should be mine.

Cock. Your place, Lord Angus? Should your place
be here,

When every plain and strath in Douglasdale
Echoes with tramp of horse and sound of horn?

Ang. Who sounds the horn? Who rides the horse?

Cock. True Scots,
Who look with longing for the leadership;
Of Angus.

Ang. But I hold no leadership;
There's one holds that, that spells a different name
From Douglas.

Cock. No, not so. The Douglas cry
Shall cleave the foeman's van, like a bold hawk
Piercing a summer cloud; that other name
Will sound but as a man's who loved his king,
And wished—proud wish!—to die in the defence
Of the unconquered soil that gave him birth.
You should not think so harshly of that name.

Ang. Sir, Douglas will take care of his own name
Do you the same of yours.

Coch. [*to the Lords*]. And you, my lords?

Ang. They do as I do; not a man of them
Stirs southward.

Coch. Then by heaven!—but patience yet.

Enter MARGARET; she stands apart.

I pray you, noble Angus, pause awhile
Ere you reject the offer of a love
That will be lasting; for it takes its strength
From duty, from regard; here is my hand;
You take the king's true love as well as mine.

Ang. [*rejecting the hand*]. The king, sir, should ha
thought of this before;

He had his nobles ready, sword and spear,
And he chose others.

Coch. But you leave the land
Naked, defenceless—England's mock and scorn,
Albany's spoil.

Ang. Gramercy, sir, make haste
If you have more to say. I've told the king,
I've told yourself, we'll have no upstart here
To outface the oldest names. Do I speak plain?

Coch. My lord, I will not say what I have heard
Of acts and threatenings that 'twere shame to speak,
Linked with the honoured name of Angus.

Ang. Well!

Speak or no speak, it makes no boot to me:
I've told you my resolve.

Coch. Then you refuse
Your following to the Border?

Ang. Till I am asked
By some one better worthy of my answer.

Marg. [*coming forward*]. Then answer me!

Coch. The Lady Margaret

Ang. Rash girl! pert minx! go mind your wheel

Marg. When men

Know not their duty, it is time, my lord,
For women to do theirs. A danger threatens—
Douglas hangs back, and calls himself a Douglas!
Take you another name, Lord Angus.

Ang. To your seam !
You speak like Master Cochrane.

Marg. For I feel
Like the Earl of Mar.

Ang. Remember, pray you, madam,
Who 'tis you are ; you bear no nameless name.

Marg. Nor wavering heart ! Angus ! for shame,
Lord Angus !

To hear the clarion sounding for the battle,
And keep you from the van ! Have you forgotten
How good Sir James took Robert Bruce's heart,
In a rich silver casket locked and barred,
Among the heathen Saracens of Spain ;
And when the fight was thickest, flung the heart
Into the midst, and said to it, "Lead on
As thou wert wont, Douglas will follow thee !"
And so he did, and slew the infidels
Till he was slain ; he was your ancestor ;
For shame, for shame !

Coch. There spoke the Randolph voice !
There beat the Randolph heart ! hear you her words,
And falter in your duty ? [*to the Lords.*]

Marg. Angus ! Angus !
Oh, if I were a man, I would not speak—
No, I would act ; but bearing a weak hand,
I give my tongue its way ; I warn you, Angus,
You cast the pedestal from 'neath your feet—
You and your lordly friends—on which you stand !
You cast the golden chance away from you
That makes your interest and your country's one.
It may not come again : close with Lord Mar—
March with the king. Would I might march with you !
Would I might see the banner of my house
Flap in the breeze above the helmed heads
Of steel-clad Randolphins !

Ang. But you shall not, girl ;
Nor James, nor Cochrane ; not a man of them,
Shall move without my order.

Marg. Stop me not !
They shall ! they shall ! Here, who will be my knight ?
Who'll lead my men ? There shall not one remain
Lurking like laggard cowards ! Are ye all

Struck dumb by the bold frowning of this man?
Who'll take my scarf?

Ang. I think, not one of them;
I think they know the peril they were in
Too well for that.

Coch. [*kneeling to MARGARET*]. O lady at your feet
I kneel; I'm all unworthy but to touch
The scarf that bears the colours of the Randolph;
But I will wear it as some sacred thing,
Some banner that has gathered in its folds
The treasured blessings of all holy saints!

Marg. And lead the men? Into the front of battle?
Here, take the scarf—summon them to your power.

Ang. Now, by my soul, this insult is the last!
I tell you—off with base concealment now!—
Death shall resolve this strife. The man, by heaven,
That spurns a Douglas dies!

Coch. Take back defiance!
Friendship I've offered twice, you've scorned it twice;
Now look you to yourselves. The sword is drawn—
Beware its edge!

Ang. Mine has an edge as well.—
Come, girl, come with me; you shall learn your place.

Marg. My place is here.

Coch. [*to standard-bearer*]. Advance the royal banner!—

[*The banner is held over MARGARET's head.*]

Lady, you are in safeguard of the King!
Who moves a step, who lifts an arm, by heaven
His doom is sped. Round her a ring is drawn
Of duty, trust, allegiance; back, I say!
Who oversteps it dies!

Ang. Come, I command you;
Come!

Marg. What! a traitor give command to me?
Oh, I have that within should bear me up
Against a thousand renegades like you;
Go!

Ang. You shall answer for this thing.

[*Exeunt ANGUS and Lords.*]

Lennox.

O ho!

I'll join this Cochrane. Angus has no chance.

I wish my finger had had blisters on't
Before I signed. I'll speak to him.

Marg.

Lord Mar. *Exit.*

I think you knew me not till now: even now

I think you do not know me, what I am:

I'm not the bold-tongued thing I seemed to be

When Angus moved me; I would have you think me

Different from that; you do me wrong. *Lord Mar.*

But I deserve your thoughts.

Coch.

I've thoughts on you

As on some loftier nature! gazed on you

As on the sculptured forms that fill with awe

The heart and brain—immortal deities

Worshipped by those brave workers of old Time.

Who clothed the utterings of their inner heart

In shapes of outward beauty. *Majesty*

Shone on your brow, as on the marble front:

Of heaven's imperial Juno; *Purity*

Lived in your eyes, as in the stately look

Of loftiest Dian; and—but pardon, lady,

I know not what I say; it matters not

What thoughts are mine—I pray you pardon me.

Marg. Pardon you, Mar? Pardon is not the word:

You saved me from Lord Angus—raised me up

To thoughts that were above me. Ah, Lord Mar,

The orphan pardons not—she thanks you.

Coch.

Nay,

Pardon is what I ask—I ask no more;

If I have been too bold—but foes are nigh.

[Gives MARGARET to the Guards.]

Answer the Randolph's safety with your lives.

My sword is near; lead onward to the king.

[Exit half the Guards and MARGARET.]

Re-enter LENNOX.

Len. My gracious Earl of Mar, I hope your lordship
Will spare me one half second.

Coch.

What d'ye want?

I'm busy.

[Going.]

Len.

My good lord, pray pardon me,
'Tis on the king's affairs.

Coch. Say on, my lord.

Len. My lord, draw this way; farther yet, my lord.
I can do James a service—such a service
As never has been done by mortal man
To a king before.

Coch. Draw back, good Cunningham.

[*Exeunt Guards.*]

What is the service?

Len. He might give his crown
To know the service; and yourself, my lord—
It touches you no less.

Coch. Think not of that.
What service is it you can do the king?

Len. I must have promise ere I do it. Life
Hangs on it, and death! the very hour I speak
I risk my safety; if a word were known—
Nay, if they saw me here—come more this way—

Coch. Lord Lennox, you have come to me unasked;
You tell me you can serve the king.

Len. I can;
But I must have sure guerdon for the deed.

Coch. What is it? You say life is on the cast,
And yet you talk of guerdon! What is it?
Land? titles? money? Name the sum, my lord;
Is it by weight you sell your services,
Or length or breadth? What is your price, I say?

Len. Look not so fierce, talk not so loud, Lord Mar;
You know that Albany is on the Border
With a strong English force?

Coch. Ay.

Len. Well, my lord,
But will you answer that his grace consent
To grant my suit?

Coch. Go on, go on.

Len. And you,
You'll aid me, too?

Coch. Say on, and have no fear.

Len. Well, Albany has dealings with our chiefs—
With me—myself—I can't deny the fact—
With Gairlies, Seton, Gray—with all of us.

Coch. Not all, think better; not with all—remember.

Len. Yes, all—except, of course, King James's friends Crawford and Drummond—but except these two.
All.

Cock. No, not all. I think there beats one heart Too proudly for such deed—though that same heart Loves me not—there's no treachery in it—none In gallant Angus!

Len. He withholds his power:
He will not aid the array.

Cock. But traffics not
With bribes and dealings with false Albany.

Len. Oh, but he does. He'll forth this very night To the Southern March to join the English force.
He's got the coin.

Cock. No, no!

Len. Think of the risk.
And I am sure you'll never grudge the price
I ask for what I do.

Cock. I think of it.
You risk your life by treason to these men
And ransom it from treason to the king.
For what you say of Angus—mark me sir.
It cannot be; the brave have higher thoughts.

Len. My lord, the banished Albany has sent
His missives to us all. The lords are banded
To give no aid to James; the English king
Gives help to Albany, and claims the crown
As suzerain lord. The duke has given consent
To hold it in full homage: I've the deed
For signature; already there are names—

Cock. The renegades! the traitors! Give it me.
Where is the deed?

Len. But is the guerdon granted?

Cock. Name it. But give the deed.

Len. That his good grace
Would give me Angus' ward, the Lady Margaret;
And you must recommend my suit, my lord.
Angus consents that I should wed the girl,
But claims one half her lands—the best half, too:
Now if a manor or two—

Cock. Give patience, Heaven!
And keep me from hot sin on this man's life! [*Aside.*]

Len. Play not so fiercely with the dagger heft ;
The king is guardian in chief ; his grace
Must give the estates in full.

Coch. Where is the deed ?

Len. In my glove sleeve.

Coch. Lord Lennox, look on me
You'll see no jesting spirit in my eyes :
You go not hence alive till you've resigned
That deed.

Len. Alive ! you mean it not, my lord.
I would not grudge—

Coch. If, ere you breathe three times,
You lay it not within my hand, you die.
By Heaven ! I'd think it sport and happiness
To spurn you into ashes with my heel.
Give me that deed.

Len. There, take it.

Coch. Cunningham !

Enter CUNNINGHAM and guard.

Keep the Lord Lennox in close ward ; one word,
One sign, one motion, cleave him to the chin.
Away ! [*LENNOX is led off. Tears open the deed*
and reads.

Gray—Gairlies—Angus !—God before !
Treason shall pay its penalty in death !
The loftiest head the first ! Justice, bare arm'd,
Shall steep the proudest of their crests in blood. [*Eri*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Hall in ANGUS' House.*

ANGUS, GAIRLIES, GRAY, &c. *A table, goblets, &c.*

Ang. If he had fifty devils at his back,
He shall not daunt me thus ! The Randolph's knight
Before my very eyes to wear her badge
And summon her array ! No, by St. Bride !

He shall not trample on us so. Lie still, [*To his sword.*
I feel you panting in the sheath!

Gair. My lord,
Reflect—it's madness to go on.

Ang. Oh, is it?
We're all a little mad in Liddesdale.

Gair. H'm—maybe so; 'twere wiser to repent.

Ang. Repent! the Douglas does not know the word,
Save to some shav'ling priest at shriving time;
But if you faint in heart, and quake at the knees,
And tremble and look pale—

Gair. You know me, Angus,
Too well for that; I only wished we had found
Some other way to reach our aim.

Ang. No, by the rood!
Short shrift, quick end. I hate your "other" ways.
I see a deer, I stab it in the throat—
I see a wolf, I spear it ere it springs—
I see a man, I slay him where he stands:
I like no "other ways" to reach my aim.

Gair. We're ready to obey you. What's your plan?

Ang. My train now waits me at the nether port;
And by good spurring I may sound the horn
In Nithsdale yet, and rouse the Douglasses
To meet this Cochrane ere he sees the Esk.
There are twelve hundred spears in Douglas' train;
I trust Lord Mar will find their points more sharp
Than he found mine. And so farewell, my lords.
[*Going.*

Enter HERALD.

Herald. The king sends greeting to the Earl of
Angus;
You are his prisoner. He will speak your doom
Ere fleets an hour.

Ang. My train—my train!

Herald. The king
Has sent them forward, save some twenty spears,
To Lauder.

Ang. Was it James did this, my friend?

Herald. I had my message from the Earl of Mar.
[*Exit.*

Ang. Fill me a stoup of wine! A prisoner—
The Malvoisie from Paris—Cochrane thought
To cheat me of my stirrup-cup [*Squire gives cup*]; po
on!

Let it shine upward to the brim [*drinks*]. This cup
Was given by James's father to my father;
The crown is on the lid—the Scottish crown—
It is not half so solid as it looks.

See! [*Wrenches crown off the cup and crushes*
Speak I plain enough? the crown is dust!
It had been better for this senseless king
To ha' let me go. It would have pleased me well
To deal with Mar. I must go higher now.

[*Doors open. A flourish*
A Herald. Room for the king!

Enter JAMES, COCHRANE, and Guards.

James. What is your quest, Lord Mar?

Coch. I call for judgment on this traitor.

James. What means this thing? We've come expectant he
By the advice of our true liegeman, Mar,
Who told us he would bring before our seat—
The seat of judgment, but of justice too—
Traitors—he named them not—and *you* are here.

Ang. Ay, sir, a prisoner; seized in my own hall.
What reason has Lord Mar to call me traitor?
If I make bold to redd my private quarrel
With the Lord Mar, Lord Mar is not yet king,
That I have heard of, to make open feud
And a drawn sword a treason. If your grace
Thinks quarrelling with Lord Mar a crime 'gainst ye
And a rough man like me, that knows no more
Than his own tongue, is to be gagged or doomed
Because it pleases the Lord Mar,—God wot,
I must submit.

James. Say on, my Lord of Mar.
I try to steel my heart to a high deed,
As suits my office; what is't he has done?

Coch. What has he done? Lord Angus, give reply
Here, in this awful presence, answer it.

SCENE II

What have you done?—
To banish that?—
To England's court?—
Who calls himself—
As Edward's—

Ang.
I have no father's name—
Having no father—
What this man—
What I have done—
To take command of this—
In my own right—
That's what I do—

Coch.—
Listen—
Mourning the state—

[*Steps are heard*—
Of any one you will—

Ang.
I clutch'd his throat—
James. Is it all that?—
With our worst foes—

Len. Alas, the truth—
Coch.
Tis in your service—
That quails before the—
What need of more?—
They set their lives at hazard—
Is theirs that fortune might have—
They would have need the—

Ang. I think Lord Mar—
Would let me whisper a few—

Coch. No; on the instant—
James. My Lord of Mar—

I'll hear him.

Coch. No, sir. You must—
Of them or me: nay, in the—
More than men's lives—
Hang on the balance. If you—

Ang. Fill me a stoup of wine
The Malvoisie from Paris—
To cheat me of my stirrup-cup—
on!

Let it shine upward to the beam
Was given by James's father;
The crown is on the lid—the
It is not half so solid as it looks
See! [*Wrenches crown*]

Speak I plain enough
It had been better for this
To ha' let me go. It would
To deal with Mar, I must

A Herald. Room for the king!

Enter JAMES, COCHRAN.

James. What is your business?

Coch. I call for judgment.

James.

What means this thing? We
By the advice of our true liege
Who told us he would bring
The seat of judgment, but of
Traitors—he named them names

Ang. Ay, sir, a prisoner;
What reason has Lord Mar to
If I make bold to redd my prison
With the Lord Mar, Lord Mar
That I have heard of, to make
And a drawn sword a treason—
Thinks quarrelling with Lord Mar
And a rough man like me, that
Than his own tongue, is to be
Because it pleases the Lord Mar
I must submit.

James. Say on, my lord
I try to steel my heart to a high
As suits my office; what is't he

Coch. What has he done? Lay
Here, in this awful presence, my

You did not think it. I have but one thought,
Your fame, your happiness. I will not leave you.
If foes gloom round you—if the dark day comes
When grief, when danger gather over you—
Strive with it; I will aid you in the strife;
There shall be one voice near to comfort you,
One arm to guard, one man to die for you!

James. Will you not leave me?—oh, I'm happy now!—
Still stay with me, advise me, strengthen me?
Oh, Walter, let my tears speak what I feel,
And cannot say.

Cock. Come, cheer you, sir,—e'en now
Tis not too late. So kind a heart as yours
Wins loving service. Angus will ride forth
To join the array. You must precede him, sir.
The royal flag must float o'er town and tower.

James. We shall set forward—oh, this very hour—
And reach the camp before the dawn of day.
Go to the Lady Margaret—bid her summon
Her clansmen from the following of Angus.
And you'll not leave me! I scarce hoped for it;
I have no words for thanks. *Rejoice me soon.* [Exit.

Cock. Good, kind—too good, too kind. The time
draws near
That ends this weary struggle. Let it come. [Exit

SCENE II.—A Room in Holyrood.

MARGARET and LADY DRUMMOND.

Lady D. I cannot bear to see you weep. Weep not,
Dear Margaret.

Marg. Who was it told you I was weeping?
I weep not; if a tear come to my eye,
'Tis not of grief.

Lady D. And what said Angus to you?

Marg. He did not say; he barked, he grunted, bel-
lowed,

A dog, a boar, a bull—no man, no man.
I tell you, Drummond, if this hand—ah me,
That it's so soft and mean—if it had held

A dagger, he'd ha' spoke in different tones—
He would, I tell you!

Lady D. Margaret, are you mad?

Marg. Perhaps I am, and therefore bear with n
Bear with me, Drummond, let me lean on you.
Give me a heart to trust to, if I weep.
But no, I will not weep.

Lady D. And so Lord Mar
Stood by you; and he wears the Randolph colour
Oh, he's so wise, that man! I've heard them say,
Too wise.

Marg. Ah, Drummond, know you this,—that m
Who go far down into the deep earth's caves,
Down, down in darkness, out of sight and sound,
Look up through the thick night, and see the heav
All filled with stars at mid-day;—great bright star
That purblind eyes blinking in the hot light
See not?

Lady D. Indeed?

Marg. And so, perhaps, 'tis well
Not to live ever in the noonday sun,
But see the starlight in deep caves.

Lady D. Indeed?
There is a sound, as if your words had meaning,
But I can't catch it.

Marg. Then, another thing;
I've heard, that when the traveller climbs the ridge
Of some far mountain, piercing the blue sky,
Up, up, far up in heaven—that on the top
Sound is not, and a dull, dead silence reigns,
Ever—for ever in the unsyllabled air.

Lady D. Well, Margaret?

Marg. So, perhaps the lowlier
Catch voices that ne'er reach to such a height
As kings and nobles strain for.

Lady D. You're above me,—
I know not what you say; I wish you'd tell me
Some pretty tale instead.

Marg. A pretty tale:
How Lady Drummond jogged along through life:
Did what her mother told her when a child;
Married, because her father wished her married;

Follows her lord's commands, because it's right ;
Goes oft to mass, because the church requires it ;
Fasts all through Lent, and eats but fish on Fridays ;—
A happy, pleasant, easy, dear good woman,—
Who'd gape and quake as if she saw a spirit,
If a great THOUGHT—a thing that fills the heart,
That lifts the soul, that shakes the poor frail limbs—
Entered her brain, flushed her pale brow and cheeks,
And filled her eye with tears. But, silly girl,
Why do I talk of tears ? See, I'm not sad.
What I have here may make me grave, calm, bold,
Not sad ; and therefore, Drummond, mark me well,
I've done with tears.

Enter an Attendant.

Attend. Please you, the Earl of Mar.

Marg. I'm glad he comes.

Lady D. I will not wait his presence.
I'll to the Queen. [*Exit.*]

Enter COCHRANE.

Marg. I looked for you ere this ;
The badge you wear assures you kindest welcome.

Coch. I have the king's command to visit you.

Marg. You rob your coming of its sweetest grace ;
I hoped 'twas by no king's command you came,
But willingly ; but no,—forgive my idle talk,—
There's something on your brow—there is a look—
Is the king safe ? Does Angus yield, and go ?

Coch. The host has moved for Lauder.

Marg. Angus with them ?
And Gray ? and Gairlies ? But you'll not desert me ?
You'll wear my colours still ?

Coch. I had not dared
To lift my hopes so high—I feared—I thought ;
You looked—you spoke ; I dreamed you would not
deign—

Marg. Now then, my lord ; I have deserv'd this pang ;
This time I make confession of my faults.

Oh, I was wrong—how wrong ! I knew you not ;
I was so thoughtless. Say you'll pardon me.
I had not strength to climb to the pure height

Of thoughts like yours. But tell me you forgive me.

Coch. Forgive you, lady!—

Marg. But I let my tongue

Rail on you, and my eyes; but they were false!

There was an awe within me even then,

I knew not why: I saw you placed so high

O'er other men. You seemed some mountain ridge

Far up, near heaven; but cold:—and yet it caught

The sunshine first. You must have thought me weak

And harsh, and cruel. Do you forgive me, Mar?

Coch. Look not with eyes like these—let me not hear

A voice like that,—they'll make the doom more sad

That hangs above me; let me bear a life

Dark, joyless,—with no star to shine on it,

Save duty and allegiance; let me not

Cherish a dream,—nay, turn you not away;

I would not have you turn away your eyes.

Marg. I thought you told me not to look on you,

Nor speak; I turn away from you

Because I would not you should see me weep.

Coch. No, weep not—there should never sorrow come

To eyes like yours.

Marg. Did you not say, a doom

Hung over you? And that your life was dark

And joyless?

Coch. And you weep! O Margaret,

If I might take your hand, and look on you,

And tell you—but, no, no; it may not be!

Marg. Wherefore? I know not what your words portend;

But this I know; there beats one heart, Lord Mar,

That shares your grief, whate'er your grief may be—

That would be partner of the darkest doom

That can be yours.

Coch. And this to me—to me?

Margaret, this hour o'er pays a life of grief.

Come what come may, I've heard from those dear

Words that would sweeten death: ay, let it come!

It cannot rob me of this ecstasy!

Marg. Am I forgiven, Mar?

Coch. Oh, ask me not!
Let me but look into your eyes, and dream;
Words can add nothing to the perfect bliss
That binds us.

Marg. But you leave me for the host.

Coch. Ay, love, to come to you again in joy,
With peace, war's holiest triumph, on my sword.
Let the base traitors threaten; there's a power
Within me now shall quell them; and the spell
That chains them,—that wakes hope within my heart,
Strength in my arm,—shall be my Margaret's love!
Come, dearest, to the king; 'twill glad his heart
To see me happy. He will thank you; come.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The Tent of Angus at Lauder.*

*Enter ANGUS, GAIRLIES, Lords, and attendants. ANG
putting on armour.*

Ang. He said he'd speak my doom. My gauntlet
knave!

Let him look to his own. The dirk that came
Last week from Milan; the short sword I wore
At Rothesay, when I slew John of the Isles.
Will daylight never come?

Gair. I think a streak
Of glimmering light rests on the pennon points
O'er all the heath.

Ang. Let the same glimmer play
On my sword blade! Listen for their approach;
Cochrane and James will be among us soon;
Then to it, my lords!

Gair. There is a rapid tramp
Of horsemen coming down the Lauder Fell;
Now they're across the bridge.

Ang. Are they in force?

Gair. I guess not more than two or three score.

Ang. Away then !
 Pause not, hold you your council in the church.
 Lochleven, have my train drawn up. Ere long
 I'll hold a parley with our lord, the king,
 As suits us both. So, leave me now, my lords,
 And wait my coming. [*Exeunt Lords.* —

The grey dawn looks cold ;
 And fitful breezes sway the lazy folds
 Of the white tents ;—what eye shall see them glow
 In the hot blaze of noon ? Will Mar's, or mine ?
 Not both, of that be sure ; unless—but, no—
 It is not worth the trial. If he left
 This nerveless king, and gave his aid to me,—
 Angus and Mar,—who could gainsay us then ?
 Not Albany, nor England, nor no Scot
 In all the land ! With wisdom and a sword
 Like his—Ha ! would he listen to it ?

[*LENNOX appears at door*—
 Who's there ?

Enter LENNOX.

Len. May I come in, Lord Angus ?

Ang. Ay, my lord ;
 'Tis easier than your going out will be.
 Lord Lennox, traitor ! spy ! deceiver ! dog !
 Why does my dagger rest within its sheath ?
 What want you here ? I had no wish to stain
 My hand with such dishonoured blood as yours.
 Speak, ere I slay you.

Len. I told nothing, Angus,—
 Nothing I could conceal ; speak not so harshly ;
 I tell you, I will aid you to my best
 Against the king, or Mar, or any one.

Ang. Oh, you are changed, then ! What is it you
 can do ?

Len. All, any thing ; Lord Mar, if that's his name
 Has played me false ; wears Margaret Randolph's
 colours ;

Claims her for bride, and has his claim allowed.
 I'd slay him with this hand.

Ang. Oh, you speak well ;
 But that's a work for worthier hand than yours.

What is't you want? I'd be alone, I tell you.
Go; I remit your life: 'twould shame my blade
To lift it on a thing so poor as you.
Go, sir!

Len. Lord Angus, 'twas to offer aid
I came to you. I bear command to-day
Of the king's guard.

Ang. Ah! well;—what then?

Len. I thought
I might be useful. Give me but revenge;
I ask no more.

Ang. Revenge? and you command
The guard? Well, then; you *shall* have your revenge.
Withdraw your men when I'm in speech with James;
I'll take their place with Douglasses—ho! ho!
A good device. See that you fail me not,
Or we have some further settlement to make.

[*Touching his sword.*]

Len. I'll wait you.

Ang. Come, then; James must be arrived
Ere this,—and some one welcomer than James.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*Lauder. Grey dawn. The Tents of the
Army seen on the Plain. Lauder Church in the
distance.*

Enter JAMES and COCHRANE.

Coch. We've rid through the thick night, and see
at last

The opening sky, where the awakened sun
Looks from his cradle in the curtained east.
How still and silent is this morning hour,
As if in breathless expectation
It heard the distant coming of the day!

James. No happy day.

Coch. Ay, sir, a happy day,
If we will make it so; a day shall bring
A glad train with him; bold-eyed Constancy,
Firm-hearted Hope, with Caution at his side.
And, God's best gift, Endeavour! Without these

No day is happy; with them, there's a light
To gild the darkest.

[LENNOX leads in the guard, and stands
motionless at the back of the stage.]

James. And the host lies there,
Silent! I know not what the cause may be,
But something weighs upon my heart. Ah, friend!

[Leans on COCHRANE's shoulder.]

Coch. You have lacked sleep; you've ridden in hot
speed:

I pray you, go you to your tent awhile,
And rest your limbs.

James. And you; where go you, Walter?

Coch. Oh, I have thoughts to keep me from my
couch.

James. Ah, Walter, what a dull-eyed mole was I
To see not that two hearts like yours could beat
But for each other!

Coch. Both shall beat for you
In truest love and loyal watchfulness.

James. Is it not well I spared Lord Angus' life?
You blame me not for that?

Coch. I trust 'tis well.
Where is his lordship's tent? Young Daylight stands
On the far hill, and gathers round his head
The beams to make his crown that awes the world.

[Looks towards the tents.]

They should be stirring, ere the lark on high
Sings his farewell to the pale morning star.
I must go rouse them for their work this day.
I'll come to you, ere long; but rest meanwhile.

[Exit.]

[The guards go off—ANGUS and the
Douglasses enter.]

James [not perceiving the change]. This is a weary
time; this clang of war

Jars on my heart; an 'twere not for my faith
In Walter, and the strength my spirit draws
From his high thoughts, this life were but a weight
Numbing the soul. After too brief repose
I must enclasp this tired breast in mail,
And then for council; well—

[Is going.]

Ang. [*coming forward*]. It needeth not.

James. Angus! what mean you?

Ang. I speak plain enough.
It needeth not that you take counsel, sir:
Our plans are fixed.

James. What thing is this? what speech?
How dare you speak to your anointed king
In guise so harsh!

Ang. I speak not in such words
As your fair friends,—your minstrels, and such like;
But I speak plain.

James. Guards, seize this man!

Ang. My liege [*pointing to the Douglas standard*],
see you the banner?

James. Treason! what is this?

Ang. No treason, sir, but justice. It is time
A Scottish king kept worthier company.

James. What is it you mean?

Ang. I'll shew you what we mean;
And your proud minion, Cochrane.

James. What of him?
You mean not ill to him? Oh, spare him, Angus,
And I'll forgive you all!

Ang. I think, my liege,
'Twere better you reflect, when you forgive,
What's your forgiveness worth. The Douglasses
Have something to forgive as well as you.
They've not forgotten how your father, sir,
Slew Douglas—basely, treacherously slew him
In his own hall. There may be thoughts like these
In some that own his blood.

James. But you'll not dare
To take his life—to slay him; him, so wise,
So good, so brave! Let me but go to him.
Ang. Move not an inch. I mean your grace no
scaith,
Unless, unless—

James. 'Tis not about myself;
I'd have you spare my friend.

Angus [*to the guards*]. Let him not stir!
I tell you, sir, the doom ere this is passed.
He dies, with all the crew of them. Nay, nay,

This is no time for holiday sweet words ;
 'Tis at your peril if you move.

Enter MARGARET in riding cloak and hood.

Marg. Come I in time ?
 Oh, sir, I heard that treason was afoot,—
 I rode in headlong haste : oh, where is Mar ?
Angus—my liege—what does this silence mean ?
Ang. It means that we are trampled on no longer.
James. It means that Mar is doomed.

Marg. Then it was true
 Angus, I kneel before you ; tell me—tell me,
 What is't you do ? Oh, sir ! have pity on him,—
 Pity on me !—I never thought to live
 To ask your pity,—but—have pity on me !

Ang. It makes my cheek grow red to listen to you,
 A Randolph asking pity for that man !

James. Save him, Lord Angus ! Is it power you ask ?
 I give you power, wealth—all that you can wish ;
 But let me hear that Cochrane is in safety.

Ang. Go, sir ! It fits you ill to waste your breath
 In suit so idle. Lead his grace to his tent.

James. Say that you'll save him ere I go.

Ang. Farewell.
 Move him away, I say.

[The king goes off with the guards.]

Marg. Where is Lord Mar ?
 If 'tis too late to save him, let me share
 The fate that may be his : in life or death—
 In weal or woe, our doom is one for ever.

Ang. Perhaps 'tis not too late.

Marg. What ! not too late ?
 O Angus, I will love you from this hour,
 As never daughter loved her sire before ;
 I'll tend upon your steps where'er you go,—
 I'll place a crown of blessings on your head
 With my dear prayers. Tell me 'tis not too late !

Ang. It rests with him and you. I hate him not ;
 Albeit he would have given me to the axe.

Marg. Rests it with me ? name but the price you
 ask,

Tell me what I may do to save his life.
 Oh, he will do your hest, whate'er it be,
 For it will give him back to me! Come, Angus,
 Take me to where he is. Let me but see him,—
 I tell you, I will win him to your will.
 His life—his life! Oh, give me but his life!
 And I will wear you ever in my heart.
 Come, come.

Ang. Build not your hopes too high.

Marg. Come, come.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*The Church at Lauder. A great door at the back of the stage with a wicket in it.*

Lords, GAIRLIES, &c.

Enter LENNOX hurriedly.

Len. Cochrane is on his way :—now life or death
 For him or us, is as this hour shall send.

Gair. What shall we do?

Len. Where is the Earl of Angus?
 He spoke so boldly when no danger threatened;
 He should be here.

Gair. Are we to kill the man?

Gray. Angus has sworn he'll do it.

Len. So would I,
 If, if—

Enter COCHRANE.

Coch. What make you here, my lords? 'Twere time
 To strike the tents, and blow the horn for march.
 What holds you dumb? Come I am unwelcome here?

Bish. Your lordship, you were scarce expected yet;
 We thought—

Gray [*and the others pushing Lennox*]. Go forward.

Len. No, not I.

Gair. I will, then.

Coch. [*to Bishop*]. Well, my lord, what was your
 thought?

Gair. [*touching Cochrane's hunting horn*]. That you
 have blown the horn too long—a rope
 Would suit you better.

Coch. Are you in earnest, sir?
Or is it a mock?

Gair. No mock, as you shall find.

Lords. No mock, no mock.

Coch. [*to the Lords, and seizing Gairlies*]. Give way there, coward lord!

Say your last prayer. I would not slay your soul;
Hence, or your lives are dust! What mean you, sir,
By words so bold?

Gair. Nothing, my lord.

Coch. Be safe,
And keep a watch upon your babbling tongue.
[*Releases him.*]

Bish. Alas, sir, 'twas a foolish frowardness;
They knew not what they did. Give me some speech
Apart, I pray you.

Coch. Let their lordships go.

[*Watches them as they go out.*]

Gair. [*to Gray as they are going*]. We'll bar the
outer door till Angus comes;

He leaves not this alive.

Gray. A good stout twine,
And a high gallows tree. [*Exeunt Lords.*]

Coch. [*to Bishop*]. And now, my lord,
What is it you would tell me?

Bish. [*putting off time till Angus comes*]. Oh, my
lord,
This is a sinful time. Alas, how black
Are all our hearts, how sunk from innocence!

Coch. Well?

Bish. Would it not be wise for even the best
To put no trust in fleshly arms like these?

Coch. Alas, my lord, I looked not at this time
For homily so grave.

Bish. Then, sir, I leave you. [*Shouting outside.*]
I think I but disturb you. [*Exit Bishop.*]

Coch. What is this?
There's more in this than meets the eye or ear :—
That taunt, that insult. [*Is going.*]

Enter ANGUS and MARGARET.

[MARGARET, *wrapt in a cloak, remains behind.*

Ang. Rest you, good my lord.

Coch. You, too! 'Twere better we should meet no more.

Ang. But we have met,—and, by St. Bride of Douglas,

The odds are great we ne'er shall meet again.

Look you, Lord Mar—nay, interrupt me not—

I'll tell my own plain tale as suits me best:

You think I hate you. Well, I love you not;—

The reason why you know: these other lords

Have doomed you to a death, within this hour,

That fits not a brave man; and that you're brave,

And wise, and kind, he'd be a bold-tongued knave

That would gainsay when I am by.

Coch.

Go on.

Ang. The doors are guarded by your enemies;
They'd take your life,—nay, I would do it myself,
If you refused my offer.

Coch.

I refuse it.

I know not what it is. It comes from you—

I spurn it, I refuse it.

Ang.

Think again.

'Tis but to live in quiet in this realm,

In your own castle, happy, powerful, rich,

But friendly to my cause.

Coch.

Pray you, my lord,

Tell me no more. You say the doors are guarded

With hostile swords; if they were multiplied

By twenty times their number, and each sword

Were pointed by a Douglas, you should fail

To move my soul one jot. Hostile or not,

I care not. My bright blade, that never flashed

Save in the sunlight of an honoured cause,

Serve me in this my need, as thou hast done

In strait as great as this! I warn you, sir,

Your life is hanging on a thread!

Ang.

Reflect.

Ten minutes shall be yours; and in my place

I leave a better pleader than myself,

To counsel you ; and so I leave you.

[*While speaking he leads MARGARET to COCHRANE's side, and goes out, looking back at them.* COCHRANE, turned away from MARGARET, does not see her.

Coch.

Doomed

To shameful death ! And Angus offers life—
And what is life ? what is the fatal charm,
In that short word that plays about the heart,
And sways it ? 'Tis a vain, blank, worthless thing :
A sword half drawn, and sheathed in the same breath—
A flickering leaf, falling from tree to ground ;
A flight by a poor bird 'tween two black cliffs
Across some narrow valley ; for brief space
Sunshine falls on its wings ; a minute more,
And all is dark again. And for this thing
Does Angus think to bend me to his wish ?
You cannot move me, sir, from what I've said :
Leave me, I charge you.

Marg.

Mar !

Coch.

My Margaret !

What blessed angel brought you to my side ?
Nay, you're the angel's self, and in the gloom
Of hour like this, how cheering is the light
Of your kind eyes !

Marg.

Ay, Walter, they are kind,
And will be ever kind ; and we shall yet
Be happy—oh ! how happy—if you yield—
No, not to Angus—if you yield to me.
Will you not yield to me ?

Coch.

I know your heart
Too well to think you'd plead for any thing
That brought dishonour with it. Shall I yield
To you ? Yes, I will yield.

Marg.

And leave the strife
Of pride and anger to those desperate men ?
While we—O Walter, what a life of joy
Will shine on us !—never to part again—
In some far spot, in our own peaceful home,
Together, still together, till we die !
Tell Angus you consent. Oh, thanks for this !
I'll pay you for it all my life with love !

Coch. Consent to what?

Marg. To be Lord Angus' friend;
To leave the court, to live in peaceful state,
Far from tumultuous thrones and wayward kings.

Coch. [*looking to the door*]. What! tempt me to my
ruin by these lips?

Villain, I tell you, no!—My Margaret,
You know not what you ask. You bid me lift
My sacrilegious hand upon my friend,—
You bid me be a traitor to the king,
False to my country, and unworthy you.
You ask me—no, you know not what you ask.
I thought you knew me.

Marg. Once I thought my heart
Was nobler than I find it: once I thought
I could have died with gladness; but, ah me,
I feel I am but a girl, a poor weak girl:
I wished to have you mine, to be your own,
Your wife, your all! I cannot see you die,
When we might be so happy if you lived!
Will you not yield?

Coch. And be a thing for scorn?
So vile, that all the mountains of the earth
Heaped in one pile on my dishonoured head
Would fail to hide me? Think on what you ask,
And tell me you would rather have me die
Than live the slave that they would turn me to.

Marg. I would not have you change from what you
are:

But I am weak; I thought I was more strong.

Ang. [*at door*]. Does he consent?

Coch. No!

Marg. Yes; a moment, Angus.—
O Mar!

Coch. What! is it Margaret Randolph's voice
That tries to win me to disgrace? I knew not—
I was most wrong—forgive me, that my heart
Deceived me in this thing.

Marg. No, no! away
False womanish fancies! You shall see me, sir,
Firm as yourself. I thought not of the price
They claimed for their forbearance.

Coch. Now you speak
As suits your noble nature, Margaret.
This is no time for honied words of peace;
What mean those men?

Marg. They mean your death.

Coch. I know

Marg. A base—base death, so bitter is their wrath

Ang. [*at door*]. Come, does he yield? the clock
on the stroke;

When it strikes six, he lives my friend, or dies
A felon's death! I cannot change the doom.

[*Shouting within*]

Marg. They've seized the king!

Coch. Ha! open wide the door!

I'll hew my way through all the fiends in hell!

Marg. They will not open. Back! come back, de
Mar!

They're in strong force. Oh! if the hour is come,
Save you from the dishonour of their touch;
They'll shame the glories of your noble life
With hangman-hands; they'll drag you to a death—
I'd have you meet a *man's* death as a *man*,
But not the death they'd have you die—not that.
See, I've no tremor now. Shew Roman courage!

[*She offers him a dagger*]

Coch. [*rejecting it*]. I have a nobler courage than ~~the~~
Roman's—

Submission: not with coward, hopeless hand
Shall I strike out the holy lamp of life.

Margaret, this is the last time we shall part;

Farewell! farewell!—Now, Angus, ope the door!

[*The clock strikes during this, the door opens, and
COCHRANE rushes out—clashing of swords and
clamour.*]

Marg. Guard him, all angels! aid him!

Coch. [*without*]. To the king!

[*He is forced back wounded—he defends the
entrance—MARGARET bars the wicked—*]

To the king! to the king!

Marg. Mar, Mar! you are in blood—

You're wounded—faint—

Coch. No, no, the door, I say!

Marg. Lean on me, Mar ; how feel you, dearest Mar ?

Coch. As one who struggles in a summer sea,
Far from the land, with tired arms, and waves
All round him.

[*A great knocking at the main door, as if to force it in ; shouting, &c.*

Margaret, give me your sweet hand ;

If I had lived to thank you for your love—

If I had lived—but—

[*He sinks to the ground ; a pause ; noise outside.*

Tell our lord the king,

I tried to make him honoured, loved, and feared :

If I had reached his tent, I would have died

As suits a Scottish noble—at the feet

Of his kind king. Margaret, what bliss it is

To see you thus ! I bless you as I die.

[*The great door is burst open ; ANGUS and the others appear ; COCHRANE, by an effort, springs up, and clutches his sword.*

Back ! back ! the ground she treads is holy ground !

Back ! back !—Ha ! [*Stagger forward and dies.*

Marg. Heard you what he said ? Give place !

Away ! my heart's on fire ! I'll have revenge !

Traitor and murderer ! [*Rushes on ANGUS' sword.*

'Tis but what I wished ;

I thank your sword for giving me this death.—

Walter, they tried to keep me from your side ;

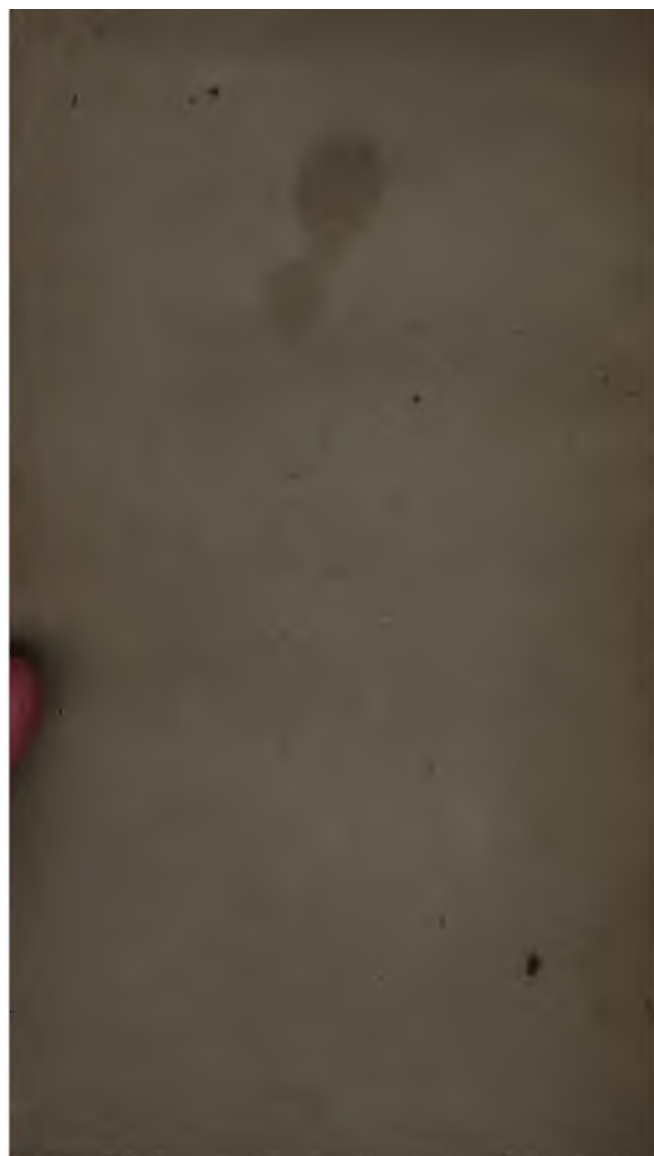
They cannot do it ! How happy 'tis to die

Thus !


[*Dies.*

THE END.

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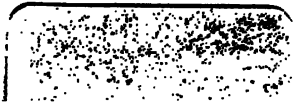




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